EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDITATIVE TECHNIQUES IN TERMS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS OF JAIPUR

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(PH2021-06)

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A
Synopsis
Submitted to

DEPARTMENT OF YOGIC SCIENCES

Lakshmibai National Institute of Physical Education,
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Certificate

I hereby declare that the synopsis "**EFFECTIVENESS OF MEDITATIVE TECHNIQUES IN TERMS OF PHYSIOLOGICAL AND PSYCHOLOGICAL VARIABLES OF COLLEGE STUDENTS OF JAIPUR**" being submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirement for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in Yoga under the Department of Yogic Sciences, LNIPE, Gwalior, during the academic year 2021-2022.

It is a bonafide record of original work carried out under the supervision of Dr. Moradhvaj Singh and the co-supervision of Prof. Sanjib Patra has not been submitted in full or part to any other university or institute for a degree or diploma.

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ABSTRACT

The increasing academic pressure and fast-paced lifestyle have significantly impacted the health of college students, especially in urban centers like Jaipur. This study aims to examine how meditation can improve students' well-being. The research investigates the effects of selected meditative practices on physiological and psychological variables. A pre-test and post-test experimental design will be used, with college students divided into control and experimental groups. The experimental group will participate in daily meditation sessions over a set period, while the control group will continue their routine. Physiological measures will be taken using standard tools, and psychological variables will be assessed using validated scales. The study aims to reveal significant positive changes in the experimental group, supporting the effectiveness of meditation as a simple, low-cost method to improve health and mental clarity. Results may contribute to incorporating meditation into student wellness programs, encouraging holistic development, and reducing the burden of mental health issues among young adults in academic settings.

KEY WORDS- Mantra, Heartfulness Meditation, Mindfulness, Mental Health, Yoga,

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INTRODUCTION

Yoga, as defined in classical texts, is a systematic discipline that harmonizes the body, mind, and spirit for self-realization. According to **Patanjali's Yoga Sutra (1.2)**, "Yogaḥ citta-vṛtti-nirodhaḥ" — yoga is the cessation of the fluctuations of the mind. This emphasizes mental control as the core purpose of yoga. The **Bhagavad Gita (6.23)** describes yoga as "duḥkha-saṃyoga-viyogaṃ yoga-saṃjñitam," meaning it is the disconnection from union with sorrow. Additionally, the **Hatha Yoga Pradipika (1.2)** defines yoga as the unification of prana (vital energy) and apana (eliminating force), leading to spiritual awakening. These definitions collectively portray yoga as a comprehensive self-discipline and inner transformation science.

Meditation (Dhyana) is a key limb of yoga, primarily described in the **Patanjali Yoga Sutras (3.2)** as "tatra pratyayaikatānatā dhyānam," meaning meditation is the continuous flow of similar thoughts or awareness on a single object. The **Bhagavad Gita (6.19)** likens the meditative mind to a steady flame in a windless place, emphasizing inner stillness. In **Hatha Yoga**, meditation is viewed as the culmination of physical and energetic practices, where the practitioner turns inward to realize the Self. Thus, meditation in yogic texts is not just mental relaxation, but a disciplined path toward spiritual insight and liberation. **Meditation** is an umbrella term encompassing various practices to achieve a relaxed state of being and inner peace. Different types of meditation share a common goal: mental clarity, emotional calmness, and physical relaxation. Below are some widely practiced forms:

1. **Guided Meditation**: Also known as guided imagery or visualization, this technique involves forming mental images of peaceful environments, often led by a teacher or guide. It engages multiple senses to deepen the experience.
2. **Mantra Meditation**: In this form, a calming word, phrase, or sound (mantra) is silently repeated to anchor the mind and prevent distractions.
3. **Mindfulness Meditation**: This technique promotes living in the present moment with awareness and non-judgment. Practitioners observe their thoughts and sensations without attachment.
4. **Qi Gong**: An element of traditional Chinese medicine, qi gong integrates meditation, breathing, and gentle movements to balance the body’s energy (qi).

5. **Tai Chi**: A serene martial art characterized by slow, flowing movements and mindful breathing, promoting balance, inner calm, and mental clarity.
6. **Transcendental Meditation**: A simple, effortless technique where a specific mantra is silently repeated, allowing the mind to settle and reach a deep state of rest.
7. **Yoga:** Integrates gentle postures, controlled breathing, and meditative focus to foster mental tranquility and physical flexibility.

Mantra Meditation and Its Scientific Basis

The word **"mantra"** derives from the Sanskrit roots "man" (to think) and "tra" (to protect or liberate). Thus, mantra means "that which protects through thought" — a tool to achieve spiritual liberation and mental focus.

Mantra Yoga is a precise science where repetition of specific sound vibrations transforms mental and physical states. These sound waves, emitted at specific frequencies and strengths, affect both the practitioner and their surroundings.

States of Sound in Mantra Practice:

1. **Vaikhari** – Audible sound, fully expressed.
2. **Madhyama** – Subtle, internal sound, not physically audible.
3. **Pashyanti** – Deep, intuitive sound vision.
4. **Para** – The unmanifest, undifferentiated root sound; pure consciousness.

Six Components of a Mantra:

1. **Rishi (Seer)** – The enlightened sage who received and shared the mantra.
2. **Chhanda (Metre)** – Governs the rhythm and pronunciation of the mantra.
3. **Devata (Divinity)** – The consciousness or deity associated with the mantra.
4. **Bija (Seed Sound)** – The core syllable(s) that imbue the mantra with power.
5. **Shakti (Energy)** – The force connecting the practitioner to divine consciousness.
6. **Kilaka (Key)** – The mystical lock that must be "unlocked" to realize the mantra's full potential.

Mala: Tool for Focus

A **mala**, a string of 108 beads, is traditionally used during mantra chanting (japa) to aid focus and count repetitions. It is held in the **right hand**, with beads moved using the **middle finger** and **thumb**, avoiding contact with the index and little fingers. The **Sumeru bead**, which marks the end of a round, should never be crossed — the mala is reversed to begin a new cycle.

Guidelines for Mantra Practice:

1. **Secrecy**: Mantras should be kept private and not disclosed.
2. **Consistency**: Practice at the same time daily for best results.
3. **Flexibility**: Mantras can be chanted with or without a mala, in any posture.
4. **Relaxation Over Concentration**: Avoid straining to concentrate; let the mind stay calm and receptive.
5. **Adapt Speed**: Chant quickly when agitated and slowly when calm.
6. **Stay Awake**: Chant aloud if feeling drowsy.
7. **Respect the Mala**: Store it respectfully in a dedicated pouch when not in use.

Aum/Om is considered as originator of all sounds in Hindu mythology. Other Mantras also start with Aum. It is the combination of sacred syllables with spiritual energy to attract positive vibrations. It is verifiable by its effects, not by description. It is a medium for the higher self. It is an organization of sound systems, such as letters and words, with uncommon potency. (Pathak, 2022)

Mahamrityunjaya Mantra

Om tryambakaa yajamahe sugandhia punoivardhanam|

Urvarukamiva bandhanatmatyormukneya ma'matata||

The **Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra**, also known as the **Tryambakam Mantra** or **Rudra Mantra**, is one of the most powerful and ancient Vedic chants dedicated to **Lord Shiva**. It originates from the **Rigveda (7.59.12)** and is also found in the **Yajurveda (Taittiriya Samhita 1.8.6.i)**,

reflecting its deep spiritual and scriptural significance. The mantra is addressed to Shiva in his aspect as Tryambaka—the three-eyed one—symbolizing higher consciousness and inner vision. The verse prays for nourishment, protection, and ultimate liberation from the cycle of death, comparing human detachment from mortal life to a ripe fruit effortlessly separating from its stem.

This mantra holds immense importance in Hindu spiritual practices. It is believed to offer protection from untimely death, promote healing, and ensure longevity. Devotees chant it during difficult times for inner strength, peace, and divine grace. It is also considered a moksha mantra, aiding the soul's liberation from worldly bondage. The vibrations generated by its recitation bring calmness, reduce fear, and deepen meditation. Thus, the Maha Mrityunjaya Mantra is not only a prayer for physical well-being but also a profound invocation for spiritual awakening and eternal peace.

Heartfulness offers a holistic approach by integrating physical postures (asanas) with meditation, creating a seamless and balanced experience in every session. This practice emphasizes the connection to the light and love within the heart, guiding practitioners toward inner calm and self-awareness. **Heartfulness Meditation** is a simple, subtle, and effective technique that complements any spiritual path. It is rooted in the ancient yogic tradition and focuses on the heart as the center of one’s being and consciousness. The Heartfulness tradition was founded by **Shri Ram Chandra of Fatehgarh** (1873), affectionately known as **Lalaji**, who revived the ancient science of yogic transmission (Pranahuti). This unique feature enables sincere seekers to experience higher states of consciousness and inner transformation. The current guide of the Heartfulness Movement is **Kamlesh D. Patel**, known as **Daaji**, who serves as the President of Shri Ram Chandra Mission. With a background in both science and spirituality, Daaji advocates for a methodical and experiential approach to meditation. As he eloquently states, “You are the experimenter, the experiment, and also its result.” His teachings bridge the gap between traditional wisdom and modern understanding, making Heartfulness accessible and practical for all.

It has been proven that Meditation can positively impact both Physiological and Psychological well-being. Meditation shows a positive impact on quality of life, cognition in hypertensive

patients, heart rate variability, sleep quality, reaction time, and many more. However, I was unable to find a study focusing on Meditative techniques in terms of physiological and psychological variables among college students. The present study is planned to assess the standard and significant effect of meditative techniques, i.e., Mahamrityunjaya mantra and Heartfulness meditation, on Breathing pattern, Hormonal profile – Cortisol level, Psychological wellbeing, Self Compassion.

STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The statement of the problem is stated as " **Effectiveness of Meditative Techniques in Terms of Physiological and Psychological Variables of College Students of Jaipur."**

OBJECTIVE OF THE STUDY

1. To characterize the level of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological well-being, Self-Compassion) among the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Heartfulness Meditation, and Control group of college students.
2. To compare adjusted mean scores of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological well-being, Self-Compassion) among Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Heartfulness Meditation, and the Control group by considering their pre-data as covariates.
3. To compare pretest and posttest mean scores of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, Cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological well-being, Self-Compassion) of the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra group.
4. To compare pretest and posttest mean score of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, Cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological well-being, Self-Compassion) of the Heartfulness Meditation group.

HYPOTHESIS OF THE STUDY

1. There is no significant difference in adjusted mean scores of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, Cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological wellbeing, Self-Compassion) of Mahamrityunjaya Mantra, Heartfulness Meditation, and the Control group.
2. There is no significant difference in Pretest and posttest mean scores of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, Cortisol level), Psychological variables (Psychological well-being, Self-Compassion) of the Mahamrityunjaya Mantra group.
3. There is no significant difference in Pretest and posttest mean scores of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, Cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological wellbeing, Self-Compassion) of the Heartfulness Meditation group.

DELIMITATIONS

1. The study will be delimited to the college students.
2. The study will be further delimited to the age of subjects will be range from 18 to 25 years.
3. The study will be delimited to the following Variables

Dependent Variables

1. Physiological variables
    a. Breathing pattern
    b. Hormonal profile – Cortisol level
2. Psychological variable
    a. Psychological wellbeing

b. Self-Compassion

Independent Variables

1. Mahamrityunjaya mantra
2. Heartfulness meditation

LIMITATIONS

1. The lifestyle and Diet of the subjects will be considered as a limitation.
2. Meditation practitioners will be considered a limitation.

SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

1. The present study will be helpful to college students in maintaining their breathing pattern.
2. The present study will be helpful for college students to maintain their Cortisol levels.
3. The present study will be helpful to college students to maintain their Psychological well-being.
4. The present study will be helpful to college students to maintain the Self-Compassion.

REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

Heartfulness is a holistic meditation practice that offers the potential to influence human beings across multiple dimensions of their existence—psychological, physiological, and beyond. Grounded in experiential philosophy and characterized by simple, accessible techniques, Heartfulness provides a unique opportunity for in-depth scientific inquiry. A central aspect of this method is the dynamic interplay between the practitioner's conscious use of intention and willpower—particularly during Meditation and Cleaning practices—and the subtle influence of Yogic Transmission, which practitioners report as facilitating a shift in consciousness. This interaction presents a compelling avenue for exploring mechanisms of inner transformation. Moreover, Heartfulness may offer insights into aspects of human experience that remain beyond the current scope of scientific understanding. Through systematic and rigorous research, this approach aims to contribute to a deeper comprehension of the intricate nature of human consciousness and well-being.(Van't Westeinde & Patel, 2022)

In this pre–post cohort study conducted from January to April 2019, 36 resident physicians participated in an evaluation of sleep quality during a one-week outpatient rotation. Sleep patterns were measured using the Consensus Sleep Diary and actigraphy. After a four-week interval, the residents repeated the same rotation, this time incorporating a structured Heartfulness meditation practice. Sleep metrics were reassessed using the same tools, and participants completed an anonymous qualitative survey to assess the intervention's feasibility and acceptability. On average, residents achieved approximately seven hours of sleep during the outpatient weeks. Findings suggest that Heartfulness meditation is both feasible and potentially effective in enhancing subjective sleep onset and various objective sleep parameters among resident physicians.(Thimmapuram et al., 2021)

This study aimed to examine changes in brain activity during the recitation of a religious hymn, with a focus on the C4-A1 channel of the electroencephalogram (EEG). The methodology involved real-time EEG recording, extraction and preprocessing of the C4-A1 signal, followed

by power spectral density analysis. Classification of the brain activity patterns was performed using Decision Tree (DT) and K-Nearest Neighbor (KNN) algorithms. The study involved five experienced yoga practitioners. Among the classifiers, the KNN model with 5-fold cross-validation demonstrated superior performance, achieving both recall and accuracy rates of 97.4%. Results revealed a significant increase in the average frequency of EEG waves during hymn recitation. These findings offer scientific insight into the neurophysiological effects of religious hymn recitation and may contribute to a deeper understanding of its cognitive and meditative benefits.(Pal et al., 2020)

This study examined the effects of Heartfulness Meditation (HM) on heart rate variability (HRV) in a group of 26 healthy individuals who practiced HM daily. HRV and residual HRV (rHRV) were measured at rest and during meditation. To control for the influence of respiration, an auditory-paced breathing session was included, using a breathing rhythm matched to the spontaneous rhythm observed during meditation. The results showed that HM led to a reduction in global vagal modulation, along with an increase in sympathetic modulation and baroreflex sensitivity. In contrast, paced breathing was found to enhance vagal modulation and suppress sympathetic activity. Unlike findings from other forms of meditation, this study did not observe an increase in vagal tone during Heartfulness Meditation..(Léonard et al., 2019)

This study aimed to assess the impact of Heartfulness Cleaning and Meditation, guided by a certified Heartfulness trainer, on heart rate variability (HRV), blood pressure (BP), and heart rate (HR). Thirty participants (21 males, 9 females; age range: 19–70 years, M = 45.1, SD = 12.7) were evaluated across three sequential phases: rest, cleaning, and meditation. Measurements taken before, during, and after each phase revealed significant improvements in autonomic function, including a decrease in low-frequency normalized units (LFnu) and LF/HF ratio, and an increase in high-frequency normalized units (HFnu). Additionally, maximum heart rate (HRmax) significantly declined during the cleaning and meditation stages, while systolic blood pressure (BP(S)) dropped notably during meditation. These physiological changes suggest that Heartfulness practices promote relaxation and enhance autonomic balance. Qualitative feedback from participants further supported the intervention's effectiveness, with many reporting feelings of peace, joy, and well-being.(Arya et al., 2018)

This study aimed to evaluate the effects of chanting the Mrityunjaya Mantra on memory, as well as visual and auditory reaction times in school students aged 11 to 13 years. Data were collected at baseline and post-intervention, and comparisons were made within the same group to assess changes in the outcome variables. The findings indicated that regular chanting of the Mrityunjaya Mantra significantly improved both memory performance and reaction times. The study concludes that mantra chanting may serve as an effective and accessible tool to enhance cognitive functions in school-aged children. (Kalaivani, 2018)

Stress, anxiety, and depression have become a part of our lives, wherein human beings are living with these. Most of the health complications in the present scenario are due to the imbalances in life leading to different levels of stress, anxiety, and finally depression, which in turn may not only deteriorate the living conditions but also impair cognitive functions. Meditation, being one of the remedies to reduce stress levels, heartfulness is one such effective solution to reduce stress. We have observed a significant decrease in perceived stress, serum cortisol levels, and improved MMSE scores in the participants who followed heartfulness meditation. We recommend further detailed studies in this area to provide more scientific evidence for the incorporation of heartfulness meditation in a routine daily lifestyle.(Mishra et al., 2017)

PROCEDURE AND METHODOLOGY

SELECTION OF SUBJECTS

To achieve the study's aim, 60 subjects will be recruited randomly, with 20 Participants in each group, satisfying the study's inclusion criteria.

Inclusion criteria:

- College student
- Age: 18 to 25 years

Exclusion criteria:

- Any addiction i.e, Smoking, Alcohol, Drug addiction, etc.
- Meditation practitioner

SELECTION OF VARIABLES

After going through the deep review of the literature analysis following are the dependent and independent variables.

Dependent variable

1. Physiological variables
    a. Breathing pattern
    b. Hormonal profile – Cortisol level
2. Psychological variable

a. Psychological wellbeing

b. Self-Compassion

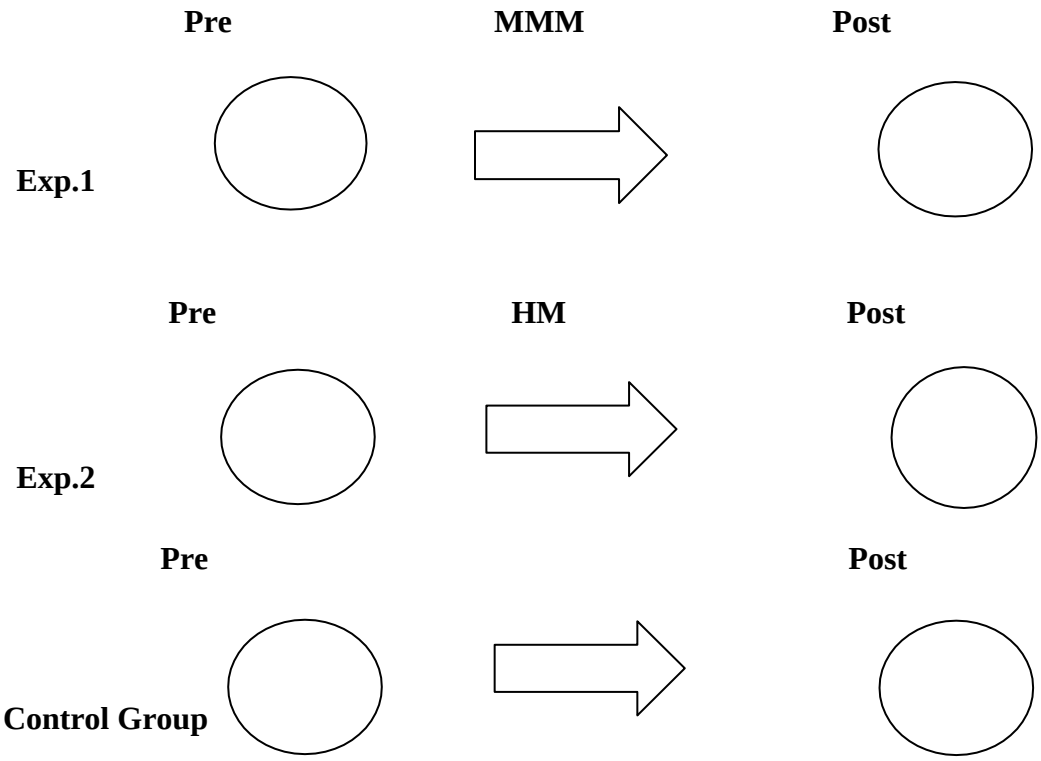
Independent variable

1. Mahamrityunjaya Mantra
2. Heartfulness Meditation

INTERVENTION

GROUP	INTERVENTION	DURATION
Experimental Group 1	**Mahamrityunjaya Mantra**	**25min-35min**
Experimental Group 2	**Heartfulness Meditation**	**25min-35min**
Control Group	**No intervention**	

RESEARCH DESIGN



CRITERION MEASURES

Pre-Post data after the 90-day intervention:

1. The Self-Evaluation of Breathing Questionnaire(Courtney & Greenwood, 2009)
2. Blood reports – Hormonal profile
3. Psychological Wellbeing Questionnaire
4. Self-Compassion Scale Questionnaire

PROCEDURE AND COLLECTION OF DATA

Data extraction

- The collection of data is completely dependent upon the performance of all these specific yogic interventions on the experimental group for 90 days.
- The sample will be tested twice (Pre-Post) with an interval of minimum 90 daysof training

Data analysis

- Data will be analysed using the appropriate method of data analysis.
- Normality test of data will be done, and it will be analysed whether a Parametric test to be used or a non-parametric test to be used.

STATISTICAL PROCEDURE

1. To assess the level of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological well-being, Self-Compassion) of college students, **Descriptive statistics will be used**.
2. To compare mean scores of Physiological and Psychological variables at Pre-test and Post-test stages of Yoga and the Control group, a **Dependent t-test will be used.**
3. To compare the mean score of Physiological variables (Breathing pattern, Hormonal profile – Cortisol level) and Psychological variables (Psychological wellbeing, Self-Compassion) between Yoga groups (Exp.1 & Exp.2) and the Control group, **ANCOVA will be used.**
4. The **level of significance will be set to 0.05**.

Expected Outcomes of the Study

The present study is anticipated to reveal that the regular practice of meditative techniques yields statistically significant improvements in both physiological and psychological parameters among college students. On the physiological front, students practicing meditation are expected to exhibit measurable reductions in breathing rate and cortisol levels, indicating enhanced autonomic balance and decreased physiological stress. Psychologically, participants are likely to report improved emotional well-being, reduced levels of anxiety and depression, enhanced concentration, and potentially better academic performance. Overall, the study aims to establish meditation as an effective, non-pharmacological approach to stress management and holistic mental health enhancement in the college student population.

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